

# A Story of a Correspondent, a Colonel and a Woman

## He Heard and Heeded

By HUGH WAKEFIELD

THE veteran war correspondent, Phil Conrad, sat on deck smoking and talking old times with the captain, who once commanded a government transport and wore the "R. N. R."

"Colonel Quartermain says he owes life and everything else to you," said the captain.

"Which I deny," Conrad replied. "I simply held my tongue where he was not at fault and I had no business to meddle. I'd just come through the enemy's lines with dispatches in the Afghan war. I was near the British position when, quite unexpectedly to us both, I ran plump into Khabeer Khan, the most dangerous leader in the district—also alone."

"It was only a question of first call. I got it. The khan surrendered without a protest and walked humbly before me into camp."

"It was a big plume for me, of course, however little I deserved it, when early in the evening I handed over my prisoner and delivered my dispatches. I'd been twenty hours on foot, and after eating all I could conveniently cover, I went to bed in the tent allotted me and was asleep in no time."

"Heaven, how the fellow shook me before I dragged my eyes open! And there stood Quartermain, holding a lighted vesta and looking like a ghost. It was his first commission and he was the scariest thing I ever saw. He simply gaped, 'Khabeer Khan has escaped,' and stood staring till the vesta burned his fingers. Then he jumped, threw it away, lighted another and began to stare again."

"I didn't care. It was rather pleasing that I had captured him and brought him to camp alone, when the whole detachment couldn't keep him there a single night; but it worked out of sleep that way by a green junior lieutenant, and I swore at the youth. You ask him. He'll admit it, in spite of the epaulet he wears today. I swore till he dropped his second vesta and didn't dare to light a fresh one. 'What the deuce ails you, anyway,' I asked, 'coming round to wake me up? Do you think I've got him here under the bed or will he go out again and find him for you?'

"He was meek as a lamb and replied: 'I didn't come for that. He's gone for good. I only came to ask a favor of you, for my mother and sister. I'm all they've got, you know. They gave up everything to purchase my commission and at the very start this beastly fluke will knock me out of it. God knows I would keep still if I could suffer alone, but on top of the rest to have them buried in shame is tough, and I thought if I could explain it to you you'd let me down easy in the papers for this sake. This is the last chance I'll have free, so I had to wake you up. I'm sorry.'

"I'd have promised anything, hands down, to get him away, but the poor fellow had to rehearse the whole or collapse. The khan had been ironed an extremely honorable thing for him to do, don't you know, for a Hindoo is bound by every law he knows to defend a relative, even if it includes the murder of an English officer. Quartermain understood it and sent word to the colonel commanding, asking that Balaya be removed. But that colonel was an ineffectual ass who considered himself another Suvarrow. He attended to every detail himself with the utmost idiocy possible, and woe to him who dared suggest a change. He sent back word that Quartermain could obey orders or go into the guardhouse with the khan, for insubordination."

"Quartermain had to watch the four sepoy, especially Balaya, as closely as he watched the prisoner. It was a hard position. He hung the lantern inside and stationed himself at the window, while the khan paced up and down and finally threw himself on the floor under his blanket—head and all—native fashion."

"Quartermain knew his life was in danger from those outside every time he looked away from them and through the window, and as long as the khan was quiet on the floor he thought he'd be safer in the room with him, with his back against the door. An hour later something possessed him to wonder if the prisoner was dead. With his pistol in one hand he drew back the blanket with the other. The khan was gone, ironed and all, and Balaya was under the blanket."

"Of course I promised what Quartermain asked and told him that if it really came to anything serious I could do a good deal more; so he went off comforted and I was asleep in a second."

"Hours later—that didn't seem minutes—I started up, wide awake and clutching my pistol. I knew that some one out of order was in the tent. It was the first gray light of morning and as soon as my eyes were used to it I discovered a figure, wrapped in a woman's sari, outlined on the other side. One of the officers had given up his bed to me for the night and it was probably some camp follower accustomed to coming there at that hour. Angry over another disturbance I threw my head down on the pillow muttering that I was the wrong man. But the woman replied:

"It is the sahib whom I seek. Bhawanee give him rest."

"She will without your help," I retorted, but the voice went right on: "It is the sahib who made Khabeer Khan prisoner. He is gone again. The trail of the serpent has crossed his track. A

life. She held the curtain back with a bare arm as perfect as ever sculptor modeled and in the same soft music said: 'It was you, sahib, and not the khan who spoke those words; but if it would save the life of one I love to kill you, I would not wait Khabeer Khan's bidding. I would do it now, while you are awake and armed. I'd do it with these empty hands. And with all respect to my proverbial powers of self preservation, I honestly believe she could and would. Heaven, how her eyes flashed and her teeth clicked and glistened! Then she went on, like a summer breeze: 'These are the words of Khabeer Khan. He said: 'The sahib is both brave and kind. Go to him. He will hear you and help you to save Balaya if he can.'

"Balaya? I muttered. 'The fellow who took the khan's place last night? And I saw tears glisten like diamonds on her cheeks as she replied, 'He is the light of my eyes, the breath of my body, the father of my children.'

"Yes, yes; but he's a traitor!" I interrupted, for the thing was getting too sentimental for me. 'What would your khan say was right for a man who cheated him as Balaya has cheated us?'

"She answered instantly, 'Death. But, sahib, I am not the khan, neither am I Balaya. They do not speak. It is I who plead for him. Balaya expects to die. He told the English officer what he was and asked to be sent away. He might have killed the officer or fled with the khan. He did his duty to a relative, then waited to die for it as a British soldier. It is I who am pleading for his life.'

"I knew that I had not one spark of influence with the colonel. I did not think she would have, but I advised her to go to him. She replied: 'I went to his bed, sahib, as I came to yours, and looked into his face. But there was nothing there for me.'

"And after that you want me to try?" I exclaimed. 'My word, he'd only laugh at me.'

"Her reply was peculiar, but there was a certain wisdom in it that was profound. She said, 'He will answer. Let him die! But go to him, sahib. Let him once be truly told that Balaya is not a traitor deserving death. Give him the opportunity to show mercy. He will not show it, but then, when the time arrives that the sun of my heaven must be touched by clouds that shall darken it, the voice of a woman will speak to him. He will hear and will heed it. He will bow his forehead in the dust to me and the fountain of my life shall not be unjustly quenched.'

"If I were an artist my life would not be endurable till I accomplished the impossible and portrayed that woman as I saw her then, her head thrown back and her long hair like a living thing caressing her bare shoulders and throbbing throat. Her fingers tightened on the curtain and her breaths heaved till they almost burst the silk chords restraining them, and her whole body shook in a deep, quivering sigh. Her olive cheeks were crimson. Her eyes were like fire. Her dark lips parted over teeth that glistened like snow."

"Suddenly it changed. She fell on her knees beside the bed, clutching my hand and sobbed: 'Oh, sahib, promise me that you will go to him! Give him the chance to be merciful, for I do not want to speak.'

"I said, 'I'll see the colonel the first thing in the morning, but I warn you now that it will amount to nothing.' And I pushed her away. It was getting too much for me. She reached the curtain, lifted it, and pointing to the reddening east said, 'It is decreed that an hour after sunrise Balaya shall be shot.' Then the curtain fell behind her."

"I never got quicker into my clothes. The colonel received me with a surly

"The report of the rifle was followed by a groan."

"The natives that it is not blood relatives, but friends or foes, in the British army."

"It seems incredible, captain, but I assure you it is true. Choking with indignation and regardless of everything I remarked, 'Of course you can execute such plans as you arrange, while alone, in command of a division; but there are two important elements which may be disaffected to your injury.'

"For example?" he grunted. And though I knew it was serious business for me I was too mad to care and replied: 'You have five sepoy here to one English soldier. Suppose they rebel. Then there are those in the seats of the mighty at home who will not indure your course.'

"You should have seen the devil in his eyes as he answered, 'I'll attend to my sepoy without your aid, and I'll give you a front place on the platform where you can take in the whole and make a grand account of it for your friends in the seats of the mighty. How much more he intended or could have accomplished I don't know. Possibly he could even have found a way to give me Balaya's medicine. He was eminently civil and kept me close to him on the raised platform."

"Balaya was blindfolded and bound

to a post a little on our right. As far as our left stood a line of regulars and in front of them one poor sepoy, his cap, covered with a deep, white puggery which almost hid his face and fell in heavy folds over his shoulders and round his throat, the same insignia of mourning. The sepoy regiments were drawn up next, to receive the full force of the object lesson, and behind them the home regiments."

"The colonel made a brief address, and not a bad one, on the duty of the soldier to defend the queen and empire even against his own father and mother. Then the poor sepoy in white stepped three paces forward and threw his rifle to his shoulder. We could only see his eyes through the folds of his puggery, but they were riveted on the colonel, watching for the signal, when he counted three and dropped his handkerchief—which was to be the fatal sign."

"It was fiendish—hideous! And the eyes of that poor sepoy seemed to flash fire through the white folds of the puggery. I thought of the woman and looked about for her, but she was not there. It would have been dangerous for her to have spoken then. I thought how fortunate that she had realized it; more likely that what she said to me was but the poetic imagery of oriental fiction. Yet cold perspiration dripped from my forehead and I shut my eyes as the colonel said 'Three!' and dropped the handkerchief."

"The report of the rifle was followed by a groan, a heavy fall on the raised platform and a gasp of horror from those about me. I opened my eyes to see the colonel shuddering in death agony at my feet, and like the handwriting on the wall, to hear again: 'The voice of a woman will speak to him. He will hear it and he will heed it. He will bow his forehead in the dust to me.' Verily, he heard and heeded!"

"Before a soul could recover from the shock, Khabeer Khan's savage followers burst upon our rear with their blood curdling battle cry. Led by the khan they had crept up close, under cover of the excitement."

"We were fortunate in being able to make a successful retreat, with only a heavy loss to report. Balaya, his wife and brother disappeared. I simply reported the colonel among the dead. It was quite sufficient."

"Quartermain was promoted for valiant conduct, which he foolishly credited to the reports which I sent home. The conduct was his. Nothing but the reports was mine."

"Not another soul knew that it was Balaya's beautiful wife, disguised as his sepoy brother, who fired the shot, and I did not see it. My eyes were shut. There would have been no sense in my making up the ungodly facts as I knew them. It would only have roused ill timed indignation at home. The colonel was dead, and he was alone to blame."

"Quartermain deserved promotion, as he has shown ever since. It was the voice of a woman that saved him, if he was really in danger, and you can tell him I said so."



"FOR A MOMENT I SAT AND STARED."



"I'LL ATTEND TO MY SEPOYS WITHOUT YOUR AID."

# FACTS AND FUN FOR THE LITTLE MEN AND WOMEN

## The Animals' Theater

By ALBERTA PLATT

YOU might call it a high class, all star vaudeville performance of animals, but their stage manager is a man, and men collect their salaries and keep them. All the animal actors get their food and clothes. They do wear clothes, at least the monkey actors do. They are always dressed for the parts they perform.

If a bad tempered, sulky, selfish, greedy or envious boy or girl wishes to know how he or she looks to the rest of the world, then that young person has only to study while the monkeys in this animal vaudeville show, which travels over the country like other strong attractions. The other evening when the monkeys were out through their exercises one surely followed squatted apart and pouted. Another monkey actor was not far away from him. That monkey was dressed in fine stage costume. Fastened to its collar at the back was a string or streamer. The bad monkey knew it was very undesirable to the dressed up monkey to have this streamer pulled. It hurt. Yet for that very reason the bad one got hold of the string and pulled it. He did this when the stage manager was looking the other way, like a bad boy in school. The man caught him at it, however, again and

again and snatched the string from him, each time giving him a smart cuff on the ear, but it did no good. The moment the stage manager turned away, presto, the bad monkey grabbed the string and yanked it unmercifully! Wasn't that like the big, teasing boy or girl who cruelly annoys those who are weaker and younger?

The monkey actors could not resist the temptation to run to the edge of the stage and snatch peanuts from the spectators. One got more than the rest because he was so pigish and so nimble. When the monkey stars had finished their act and the stage manager was bustling them behind the scenes, this gluttonous chap lingered, dodged out of sight of the manager and was able to secure several peanuts after the rest had left. He kept one eye on the manager, the other on the peanuts. Finally that gentleman turned as if he were about to see the delinquent. That instant this smart monkey hopped nimbly into the rear rank of his brethren before the manager could reach him. Was not that again for all the world like a greedy boy or girl?

A dog, however, is perhaps the smartest of all this troupe. He is a great

THE BAD MONKEY AND THE MANAGER.

THE DOG WITH A MUSICAL EAR.

## Dickie Dawdle-so and the Swimming Match.

By KATE E. JAMIESON.

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Dickie Dawdle-so thought that at swimming He could give Johnnie Doe a great "trimming;" So he dared him to try A real race by and by, When the tide at its highest was brimming.

Johnnie Doe told his friend, Rhyming Joe, Who said he'd be much pleased to go. The pair sat on a rock In the sand, near the dock— When Dick came the tide was dead low.

Exactly the effect of snuff. Even in planting the wood it will sometimes cause sneezing. No insect, worm or barnacle will touch it. It is very bitter to the taste and when placed in water will sink. The color is light brown, and the grain very close and hard. For dock work, pliers or jetties it is useful, lasting a long time while under water.

Two Much of a Good Thing.

Mrs. Smith—I am afraid I shall have to stop giving Bobby that tonic the doctor left for him.

Mr. Smith—Why? Isn't he any better?

Mrs. Smith—Oh, yes. But he has got down the banister six times this morning, broken the hall lamp, two vases, a water jug and a looking glass, and I don't feel like standing much more.

A Tree That Makes You Sneeze.

Among its many curious products South Africa includes the "sneeze wood" tree, which takes its name from a fact that one cannot cut it with a saw without sneezing, as the fine dust has

posse. It is said now that in German New Guinea gutta percha as well as rubber has been found in large quantities.

In Berlin 321 public buildings are owned by the state and 457 by the municipality.

Mr. Carnegie's present income is stated to be \$15,000,000 a year or \$20 a minute or \$1,200 an hour.

The people of the United States are aiding largely in the development of Canada. Within the next year millions

of dollars have been invested there in agricultural and timber lands, mining and manufacturing industries.

A geological survey report on Crater Lake in Oregon, published as follows: The assertion commonly made that this remarkable body of water is bottomless took a line 2,000 feet long, however, to reach the bottom in the deepest part. It is asserted that the longest lived people are those who make breakfast their chief meal.

The human jaw is very loosely socketed in the skull, so that it is often dislocated by the mere act of yawning.

Five thousand dollars have been paid for the drinking glass used by the late emperor of Austria while ruling the waters of Laxemburg-Wallach, near Wiesbaden.

Lord Northcliffe has decided that any one who opens a savings bank in the state so long as he does not use the words "savings bank" or "savings institution" is deserting the business of the concern.

## BE A MAN.

A youngster stood upon the street And cried and cried and cried. For he had lost the most precious thing Had spoiled the eggs beside.

"Oh, me, oh, me!" said Parson Good As up he started to start. The fearful face and ruffled head. "There, now! Come, be a man!"

Then something very like a smile Passed o'er two rows of pearl. "Please, sir, how can I be a man When I'm a little girl?"

A Distinction.

The Nurse-Master Tommy, did I hear you teaching the parrot to use naughty words?

Tommy—No, nurse. I was telling it the things it ought not to say.

Zoological Hind Man's Bust.

Blindfold one of the company and set him in the center of the room, with a wand in a long feather in his hand. All the other players stand in a ring, imitating the noise of any animal he chooses. The blindfolded person touches one of the members of the ring. He in his turn must imitate the sound to the best of his ability, and if the blindfolded person can guess who he is he is hit and the other released, and so the game proceeds.

An English Boy's Interpretation.

"How was it," said the Scripture examiner, "that the Jews did not at once fall upon David and eat him up?" This was a riddle, but one little chap, swelling with national pride, blurted out: "Because they was British Jews, sir!"

## ITEMS FROM NEAR AND FAR.

A natural soap mine has been discovered near Ashcroft, British Columbia. The composition of the soap seems to be about one-fifth borax. A company has been formed to work it.

A person with good sight can see another person's eyes at a distance of eighty yards.

At the present day many cotton mills are working in Bombay, and more will soon be started. Already the entire

supply of India and to some extent of China and Japan is furnished by the Bombay mills.

Two and a half hours is the limit allowed by law for a day's work in factories for women and children as well as men in France. Twelve hours is the maximum day in factories employing men exclusively.

The pair of gloves and accompanying note sent by the Princess of Wales to

a little Canadian child were recently bought by a loyal Montreal gentleman for \$116.

Ninety thousand pounds of snails reach Paris daily. They come from Burgundy and Provence principally.

On the railroads in Canada it is necessary to keep over 500 snowplows in operation every winter.

There are now ten Jewish M. P.'s in the British house of commons.

When the last fragments of the ruined campanile in Venice were removed,

thirty bottles of wine were found unbroken in the custodian's room.

The house in which Robert Burns died at Dumfries is now let as a dwelling place at a rent of \$45 a year.

By applying guano or glycerine to their roots a French scientist declares that he has been able to stimulate the growth of plants.

Two years ago the German Colonial society offered a prize for the finding of a plant in the German colonies furnishing gutta percha suitable for cable purposes.